



Windsor Christian Church  
2025 Lenten Devotional

## **The Heart of Jesus**

**I've often heard the challenge to be the hands and feet of Jesus. Dwelling on that thought led me to become intrigued about how to become Jesus' very heart. How can we walk so closely with Jesus that we reflect Him in the works of our hands and feet but also to the depths of our heart?**

**In a marriage the two become one and as the years of my own marriage go by, I see that oneness more and more clearly. We finish each other's thoughts. We know the deepest dreams and prayers of each other. The two of us have become one in many ways and we have somehow become more than the sum of each of us separately.**

**So how can Jesus and I become more one? I can do great things by becoming Jesus' hands and feet, but even greater things if I dare to become His heart.**

**My prayer for you this Lenten season is that as you read this devotional, you will be challenged to grow your own heart, and to begin the process of transformation of your heart into His.**

**Deb Mills**

**March 5, 2025**

*Whoever is wise, let him heed these things and consider the great love of the Lord. Psalm 107.43*

When it comes to having a big heart, God wins hands down. His love cannot be contained. It is bigger and wider and longer and deeper than we can fathom. And if that's not hard enough to wrap your mind around, try Ecclesiastes 3:11 that says "God has set eternity in the heart of men." Can you grasp that? Everything, from beginning to forever and beyond is not tucked away in God's heart. Instead, it is in the heart of you and of me. I know this is Lent and not Advent, but perhaps our hearts have shrunk a few sizes and it's time to consider how God melds our hearts into the very heart of Jesus. Perhaps it's time to become the very heart of our Lord.

Lord Jesus, create in me a loving heart. I give you my heart and pray that You will help me to become bigger hearted, reflecting more and more of Jesus in all that I say and do.

**March 6, 2025**

*Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus. Philippians 2:5*

Somewhere along the line, I heard a speaker pose this question, "What if for one day, Jesus were to become you? You look like you, but it is Jesus who wakes up in your bed and assumes your life and all the commitments on your calendar. For one day, your life is led by the heart of Christ. What would be different? How would you feel? Would your view of the world and everyone in it change? Would people around you see a difference? Would you still do what you had planned to do?"

It's hard to fathom, but that's exactly what God has in mind. He wants you to think and act like Jesus. Ephesians 4:23-24 call us to "put off our old selves" and "put on the new self, created to be like God." God's plan for us is nothing less than a heart transplant. One of my favorite writers, Max Lucado said, "God loves you just the way you are, but He refuses to leave you that way. He wants you to be just like Jesus."

Lord Jesus, Help me for just today, to give you my heart and let you control my actions, my words, and my thoughts. Create in me a Jesus heart.

## **March 7, 2025**

*When they did not find Him, they went back to Jerusalem to look for Him. After three days they found Him in the temple courts, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. Everyone who heard Him was amazed at His understanding and His answers. Luke 2:45-47*

Sometimes I wish there were more stories of Jesus' childhood included in the Bible. For instance, did He ever track mud into the house? But this story that is included is an amazing one of a young boy choosing to spend hours upon hours at the temple surrounded by the teachers of the law rather than playing with friends. Like a sponge He was absorbing everything they had to say. So absorbed was He that He missed the caravan home, and His parents had to come back and get Him.

This story gives us the answer of how to have a child like faith. Like sponges we should delve into scripture and absorb all we can. Like Jesus, we should be found in the temple, learning all we can.

Lord Jesus, create in me a hungry child like heart. Increase my cravings to learn more about You. Fill me with a desire to spend more time at church, learning about You and fellowshiping with other Christians.

## **March 8, 2025**

*"Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart and you will find rest for your souls." Matthew 11:29*

When Jesus described His own heart, he used the terms gentle and humble. If we are on a mission to develop the heart of Jesus, we will need to step up the gentleness and humbleness in our own lives. The Greek words for gentle and humble in this scripture are praus and tapeinos. These two words translate to meek and gentle, but not to anything resembling wimpy. Praus can also mean someone who chooses to restrain their strength for a greater good and tapeinos can also mean being God reliant rather than self-reliant.

Lord Jesus, create in me a gentle and humble heart. Help me to multiply the praus and tapeinois in my own life, to be gentle rather than pushy and to rely on You rather than my own understanding.

## **March 10, 2025**

*"Zacchaeus wanted to see who Jesus was, but being a short man he could not, because of the crowd. So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore tree to see Him, since Jesus was coming that way. When Jesus reached the spot, he looked up and said to him, "Zacchaeus come down immediately. I must stay at your house today." Luke 19:3-5*

We are all familiar with the story of Zacchaeus, the wee little man who was pushed aside by the crowds and had to climb a tree to get a glimpse of Jesus. Zacchaeus was the kind of person most of us would overlook or even ignore. Despite the crowds, Jesus didn't overlook him. In fact it was Zacchaeus that Jesus chose to spend the day with. With a heart of kindness, Jesus reached out to a wee little insignificant hated tax collector and transformed Zacchaeus' life.

Lord Jesus, create in me a kind heart. Help me to notice the overlooked, the marginalized, and the ignored. May I be a vessel of Your love and reach out in kindness to them.

## **March 11, 2025**

*“When Mary reached the place where Jesus was and saw Him, she fell at His feet and said, “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.” When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come along with her also weeping, He was deeply moved in spirit and troubled. “Where have you laid him?” he asked. “Come and see Lord,” they replied. Jesus wept. Then the Jews said, “See how He loved him!” John 11:32-36*

When Mary in her grief confronted Jesus and basically accused Jesus of causing Lazarus’ death by His absence, Jesus responded with empathy and compassion. He could have gotten defensive and said something like, “I wasn’t even here, how is this my fault?” He could have justified his absence with “I got here as quick as I could.” But instead, He wept. He understood Mary’s grief and her need to blame someone or something for her brother’s death. He was “deeply moved in spirit and greatly troubled.” Even though He already knew the next chapter. Jesus already knew how this story was going to end. He knew He could and would raise Lazarus from the dead. You can’t fake love like that.

Lord Jesus, create in me an empathetic heart. Help me to look beyond the words and see into the heart of the one speaking so that I might respond with empathy and understanding. Help me to be less quick to take the words of others personally and to see things from their point of view.

## **March 12, 2025**

*“Then the righteous will answer him, “Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you? The King will reply, “I tell you the truth whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.” Matthew 25:37-40*

Want a list of what having the heart of Jesus looks like? Check out Jesus words when He talks about dividing the sheep from the goats. I know that in today’s sports world, being a goat is a good thing. But it’s not something you want to be in Jesus’ eyes! He calls us to care for the hungry, the thirsty, those in need of clothes, the sick, and those in prison. To have the heart of Jesus, we need to be merciful to those the world sees as marginal nobodies, the poor and the desolate. Verse forty six is a scary verse, telling us that those sheep who live with merciful hearts will be led into eternal life and those goats who do not will go away into eternal punishment.

Lord Jesus, create in me a merciful heart. I don’t want to be a goat! Help me to grow a heart filled with mercy for others and to reach out and help others when I am able.

## **March 13, 2025**

*Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, Lord how many times shall I forgive my brother when he sins against me? Up to seven times? Jesus answered, "I tell you not seven times, but seventy seven times." Matthew 18:21-22*

There is no one who holds a candle to forgiving like Jesus. He took all the sins of all mankind for all of time upon His shoulders and carried them to the cross. He didn't stop at seventy-seven sins. He didn't stop at seven million seven hundred and seventy sins. He didn't stop forgiving. Ever. Regardless how many times we sin against Him. And He's still in the forgiveness business today. Always and forever. Over and over again He prays, "Forgive them for they know not what they do."

Lord Jesus, create in me a forgiving heart, one that doesn't even stop to consider how many times I've had to forgive an individual, but instead one who is always ready to forgive. Help me to let go of grudges and in the process reflect Your light to those who have wronged me.

## **March 14, 2025**

*"Therefore, the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his servants. When he began to settle, one was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents. And since he could not pay, his master ordered him to be sold, with his wife and children and all that he had, and payment to be made. So, the servant fell on his knees imploring him, "Have patience with me and I will pay you everything." And out of pity for him, the master of that servant released him and forgave him the debt." Matthew 18:23-27*

Forgiveness is hard. It's hard not to hold grudges against those who have wronged us or hurt our loved ones. Humans are fickle. They want two standards of forgiveness, an all-inclusive free pass for themselves and one less all-inclusive for those who have done them wrong. God doesn't have two rule books. There are no levels of forgiveness. As hard as it might be, we must let go of grudges and truly forgive those who hurt us. Later in Matthew 18, the forgiven servant fails to forgive someone in debt to him. The king calls him back and he's held accountable for not showing mercy as he had been shown mercy. We've all been showered with God's mercy at one time or another. We've not been given what we deserve. God has wiped our slate clean over and over again, and in turn, we need to be just as anxious to shower others with mercy.

Lord Jesus, thank you for your mercy. Thank you that I haven't gotten my "just deserts." Forgive me when I hang on to grudges. Create in me a merciful heart, forgiving others as You have forgiven me.

## **March 15, 2025**

*A man with leprosy came and knelt before Jesus and said, "Lord, if you are willing you can make me clean." Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man. "I am willing," He said, "be clean!" Immediately he was cured of his leprosy." Matthew 3:2-3*

Leprosy has been around for centuries. Archeological remains suggests that it's been around since at least 2000 BC. In Jesus day, leprosy was a feared and highly dreaded disease that was considered a mark of sin and divine judgement. Lepers were unclean and to be avoided. As the disease progressed, people became disfigured, misshapen with oozing wounds. Lepers were repugnant and shunned. But not to Jesus. Jesus reached out and touched the lepers. He was more than willing to get His hands dirty to reach out to humanity's cast offs and to heal them.

It's easy to be repulsed by today's outcasts. I admit, I've crossed to the other side of the street to avoid encounters. I've avoided eye contact with the beggar at the corner, looking for a hand out. I've turned my nose up quite literally to the smell of the homeless unable to bathe. I've been judgmental. I'm not proud of my response. It's as far away from the response of Jesus as is humanly possible.

Lord Jesus, I admit my sinful reactions to the outcasts of the world. Forgive me when my reaction is to avoid rather than to help, to judge rather than to love. Create in me a willing heart to help these misfortunate people who are also made in Your image.

## **March 17, 2025**

*Then He got into the boat and His disciples followed Him. Without warning, a furious storm came up on the lake so that the waves swept over the boat. But Jesus was sleeping." Matthew 8:23-24*

Storms are scary. Once we were on a trip to Florida when a hurricane joined us. They closed the grocery stores. They closed Disney World. The staff at the resort we were staying at left us voice mails. First we were instructed to bring our furniture off our decks into our condos. The next call told us we were to fill our bathtubs with water in case we found our selves without water. Lastly, the email announced that all staff were leaving and we were on our own. They'd return when the hurricane was over.

Storms come up unexpectedly. Just the day before we had dolphins swim right beside us. For those of you who don't know, I LOVE dolphins. They were right there beside us in knee deep water, we could hear their whistles and clicks of greetings. I was pretty excited with not a care in the world.

The next day, everything changed. When that last phone call message came through from the front office, I was petrified. I was just like the disciples caught in the storm on the Sea of Galilee. I've not heard God's voice directly on very many occasions, but in that moment, I very clearly heard the reminder, "I am the God of the dolphins and the God of the storms. Do not be afraid." And calmness filled my being.

Lord Jesus, thank you for filling me with Your peace during the storms of life. Help me to remember who is in charge, regardless what I am facing. Create in me a calm heart, filled with the reassurance of Who is in control.

## **March 18, 2025**

*“On hearing this, Jesus said, “It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. Go and learn what this means, I desire mercy, not sacrifice. For I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners.” Matthew 9:12-13*

Jesus is having a nice dinner in the home of Matthew, the tax collector. In the eyes of the Pharisees, Jesus was spending way too much time with sinners, and they confronted Jesus’ disciples, questioning Jesus’ judgement in His choice of dinner companions.

Tax collectors weren’t thought of very highly in Jesus’ day. They were known for charging people extra so that they could pad their own pockets. They were right up there with the worst of the worst sinners and Jesus was spending time with them. In the eyes of the Pharisees, these people were sinners beyond saving, outcasts that should be avoided. To Jesus they were sinners and outcasts in need of saving.

Today’s world is full of outsiders in need of a little evangelism. Today’s world is also full of Pharisees who see them as beyond saving.

Lord Jesus, help me to see with your eyes, and to grow a heart like yours. Create in me a merciful heart that desires to reach out to those who have lost their way.

## **March 19, 2025**

*Then He touched their eyes and said, “According to your faith will it be done to you,” and their sight was restored. Matthew 9:29*

Two blind men are desperate. They follow Jesus calling out to Him, “Have mercy on us.” They were so desperate, they followed Jesus right into a house, continuing to cry out to Him. They remind me of the woman with the issue of blood. Nothing was going to stop them from getting closer to Jesus.

Overflowing with faith, two blind men blindly follow Jesus right into someone’s house. They have no idea where they are or whose house they have entered. Overflowing with faith, a woman risks punishment for reaching through the crowd with the intent of just touching the corner of Jesus’ robe.

Lord Jesus, create in me an overflowing heart. One so full of faith that I don’t stop to consider where we are going as long as I am following You. One so full of faith that I don’t let the crowds and pressures of the world stand between us.

## **March 20, 2025**

*“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me for I am gentle and humble in heart and you will find rest for your soul. Matthew 11:28-29*

This isn't the first time Jesus has referred to himself as gentle and humble. He uses the same adjectives in Matthew 11 when He encourages us to take His yoke upon our necks so that He might grant us rest for our souls. To be both gentle and humble means to look through the eyes of Jesus and see ourselves and others with perfect vision. Humility involves an accurate estimation of one's status before God, gentleness involves our treatment of others despite their status before God. We are all alike. We are all sinners. We all fall short of the glory of God. In an effort to remain humble, we must guard our hearts against becoming prideful. In an effort to remain gentle, we must guard our hearts against becoming judgmental.

Lord Jesus, create in me a gentle and humble heart. Help me to do nothing from selfish ambition, but instead in humility, let me count others as more significant than myself.

## **March 21, 2025**

*When Jesus heard what had happened, He withdrew by boat privately to a solitary place. Hearing of this, the crowds followed Him on foot from the towns. When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, He had compassion on them and healed their sick. Matthew 14:13-14*

Have you ever had a horrible, no good very bad day and you just wanted to be alone? Jesus was having that kind of day. He'd just gotten word that his cousin and dear friend, John the Baptist had been beheaded. He grabbed a boat and headed out to be alone. Maybe He cried out to God along the way. Maybe He asked, “Why, God?”

A moment of solitude wasn't to be. He pulled the boat ashore and the crowds were everywhere, waiting for Him to heal them and make their own pain go away.

Jesus didn't put His boat in reverse. He didn't run the other way. Despite His heavy heart, He had compassion on them and healed their sick. Compassion is three-fold. First Jesus saw the people. We must do likewise, not walking this world blindly, but seeing those around us that are hurting. Secondly, He felt their distress. Jesus wept with the people, He felt their pain. Once He saw their distress, He couldn't get it out of His mind, even though His own heart was breaking. And finally, He acted to eliminate the cause of their distress, He put aside His own plan to be alone and healed their sick.

Lord Jesus, create in me a compassionate heart, one that not only sees those around me that are in pain, but that feels their pain right along with them and steps in to help those in need.



**March 22, 2025**

*After He had dismissed them, He went up on a mountainside by Himself to pray. Matthew 14:23*

It's been a long day. Jesus had dealt with hundreds of people, healing their sick, casting out demons, teaching them the ways of God. He's undoubtedly had a few conversations with the Pharisees who have tried to trip Him up. His feet ached. His throat was dry. He was beyond exhausted. Time to kick back in the recliner, relax, watch some TV and fall asleep, right? Wrong. Time to climb up a mountain to be by Himself and to pray. Jesus knew the importance of spending time in prayer. It is often recorded in scripture that He went off by Himself to pray. I often think about how Jesus might have prayed. How did God answer Him? In a loud booming voice or a soft whisper? There are some recorded prayers of Jesus in scripture, but did He also just carry on a conversation with His Dad? Did they joke together? Did they weep together? I think they did and you know what else? We can have that same relationship with God. We are called to be His sons and daughters. II Corinthians 6:18 tells us "and I will be a Father to you, and you will be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty."

Lord Jesus, create in me a prayerful heart, one that draws ever closer to our Father. Help me routinely to take the time to get away from the stress and hassles of this world and glimpse instead the perfect world to come as I spend unhurried time conversing with God. Teach me to hear His voice and to act on His word.

**March 24, 2025**

*A man in the crowd answered, "Teacher, I brought you my son, who is possessed by a spirit that has robbed him of speech. Whenever it seizes him, it throws him to the ground." Jesus asked the boy's father, "How long has he been like this?" "From childhood," he answered. "It has often thrown him into the fire or water to kill him. But if you can do anything, take pity on us and help us." "If you can?" said Jesus. "everything is possible for him who believes." Immediately the boy's father exclaimed, "I do believe; help me overcome my unbelief." Mark 9:17-18, 21-24*

"IF" is the biggest little word I know. Like this father who only wants the best for his tormented son, we often add an "if" to our prayers. Jesus' response today must mirror His response that day. "If I can? What are they talking about? If I can? Nothing is beyond me. Of course I can! Everything is possible for those who believe." It kind of sounds like we think Jesus might need an out.

Abram and Sara waited for twenty five years for their prayers to be answered. Did they doubt along the way? They were human, so I'm betting they did. After all, Sara laughed out loud at the absurdity of the prayer coming true when it finally did.

Lord Jesus, create in me a believing heart. Help me not to miss the miraculous because of my lack of faith. Like the father, I confess, "I do believe; help me overcome my unbelief."

## **March 25, 2025**

*“Everyone will be salted with fire. Salt is good, but if it loses its saltiness, how can you make it salty again? Have salt in yourselves and be at peace with each other.” Mark 9:49-50*

A couple of years ago, our household had a few heart issues that required a change in diet; no salt. Whoa, did things taste bland. Regardless how I changed the recipes, leaving the salt out changed everything. There is something called salt substitute, but it's a poor version of the seasonings we were used to. In the case of salt, there is nothing like the real thing!

We are called to “have salt in ourselves.” The way we live should make others thirsty for God. Regardless where we spend our days, and who is around us, we should “flavor” our environment with a little “God-salt.” The world around us is a mess. There is moral decay wherever we look. It's our job as salt to not only make others thirsty for the God we know, but to serve as a preservative. The Christ centered culture that many of us grew up is teetering on extinction. If we don't preserve it for the next generation, who will?

Lord Jesus, create in me a salty heart, one that adds flavor to this world, one that causes others to thirst after You, and one that helps to preserve the real thing of Christ centered living rather than a poor substitute.

## **March 26, 2025**

*Sitting down, Jesus called the Twelve and said, “If anyone wants to be first, he must be the very last, and the servant of all.” Mark 9:35*

We use a deck of playing cards with our grands. If there is a decision to be made, we pick a card and the high card gets to go first. Depending on the age, it has eliminated a lot of tantrums and arguing, because after all, no one wants to be last, right?

Jesus calls us to be servants. Being a servant is not just choosing to be last, but it is desiring to be last. Read that again. If we are to be servants of Christ, we must put Him first, others second, and ourselves last. And it's not about just not whining and complaining about being last, it's actually wanting to be last.

Lord Jesus, create in me a servant's heart. One that listens to the call of my Master, follows what He asks of me, and extends a helping hand to everyone around me.

## **March 27, 2025**

*He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation." Mark 16:15*

It is easy to talk about favorite hobbies, favorite sports teams, and new recipes. Why is it so dang hard to talk about my favorite person in all the universe, the Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father and Prince of Peace? My human mind gets all tangled up with questions. What if they aren't interested? What if their faith is different than mine and they are way better at debate than I am? What if they ask me questions that I don't know how to answer? Somehow, it's just easier to talk about the latest book I've read or last night's ballgame.

Jesus spent his entire ministry sharing His Father with those around Him. And He calls us to do the same.

Lord Jesus, create in me an obedient heart. You never promised it would be easy to share my faith with others. You did mandate me to do it though. Help me to be obedient. Make me sensitive to Your nudges to visit with others about You.

## **March 28, 2025**

*Have salt in yourselves, and be at peace with each other. Mark 9:50*

In the very same verse that tells us to keep our saltiness, we are called to be at peace with one another. The way we live should make others thirsty for God and one way to do it, is to live in peace. Does winning the argument really matter? Does being right make any difference? If someone hits you, can you turn the other cheek? Every human cell in our body questions how we would truly answer these questions and yet that is what Jesus did. He was spat on, beaten, ridiculed, mocked, and belittled. All He had shown was love and He'd made many thirsty for God. But humans are a fickle group and they turned on the very One who loved them unconditionally.

Lord Jesus, create in me a peaceful heart. You never promised me a life of peace, but you gave me Your peace that surpasses all understanding, to help me get through the difficult times. Fill me with Your peace Lord that my actions may make others thirst for You.

## **March 29, 2025**

*Give and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you. Luke 6:38*

When we read this verse, our minds often jump to our money and possessions. We can be very stingy with our money and think we never have enough possessions, but there is something else we are pretty stingy with and that is forgiveness. The verses leading up to this verse are about not judging others and loving our enemies. Giving of our money and possessions is a great thing and undoubtedly it will lead to blessings. Our blessings will be based on our willingness to bless others. Our measure of treating, forgiving, and judging others will be the basis used for how we are treated, forgiven, and judged by others and by God.

Lord Jesus, create in me a giving heart. Help me to live open handed with my money and my possessions, helping those I can. Open my heart to give others the benefit of the doubt instead of judging them. The promise is clear, if I am generous with my possessions and my forgiveness, You will be generous to me.

## **March 31, 2025**

*But the seed on good soil stands for those with a noble and good heart who hear the word, retain it and by persevering produce a crop. Luke 8:15*

It won't be long before farmers and gardeners everywhere will be planting seeds. Some will be eaten by birds. Some will fall on rocks and not be able to take root. Some will be choked by the thorns and weeds. But some will grow and produce a crop. Even though some will not grow, they plant anyway. Even though some will get eaten, they plant anyway. Even though....plant anyway. We can find lots of excuses to not share the word of God. Even though some don't listen, do it anyway. Even though some of our words get choked out, do it anyway. Even though....share the word anyway. Because there is good soil out there, ready to be planted. We need to use our own noble good hearts to grow and multiply noble, good hearts.

Lord Jesus, create in me a noble heart, one that is upright and merciful. One that reaches out to share with others the goodness that You've brought into my own life. One that is eager to share the good news.

## **April 1, 2025**

*Therefore, consider carefully how you listen. Luke 8:18a*

"I know you think you understand what you thought I said, but I'm not sure you realize that what you heard is not what I meant." (Alan Greenspan) Listening is a tricky skill. We hear lots of things, but how often do we truly listen? And how often do we truly hear what God is telling us? He speaks to us in lots of different ways. Through a beautiful sunrise. Through the words of a dear friend. Through scripture. Sometimes He speaks through a small clear voice, at other times, it's a booming voice of thunder. Maybe He's spoken to you through the words of a sermon or the lyrics to a song. One thing is for sure, we all need to train our ears to listen. Psalm 46:10 tells us to be still and know that God is God. And in this scripture in Luke, Jesus warns us to consider carefully how you listen.

Lord Jesus, create in me a listening heart. When the noise of this world gets too loud, help me to remember to be still and listen for your voice. You will always show me the way.

## **April 2, 2025**

*I tell you whoever acknowledges me before men, the Son of Man will also acknowledge him before the angels of God. But he who disowns me before men will be disowned before the angels of God. Luke 12: 8-9*

These words of Jesus remind me of a time in the not-too-distant future when Peter will deny Jesus not once, but three times on the same night. If I stop for a moment, I can hear that rooster crowing. It is saddening to know just how weak we humans are. Jesus knows we are all going to fall short and He warns us of the importance of acknowledging Him in all circumstances. It is never a good idea to turn our back on Jesus.

Lord Jesus, create in me an acknowledging heart, one who doesn't forget to say thank you for all that you do for me. Thank you for the warm home I find myself settled comfortably in during this blast of cold weather. Thank you for the beautiful morning sun shining across the glittering snow. Thank you for all you do for me each and every day. May I always remember to acknowledge you.

### **April 3, 2025**

*“When Jesus had washed their feet and put on His outer garments and resumed His place, He said to them, “Do you understand what I have done to you? You call me Teacher and Lord, and you are right, for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Teacher have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another’s feet.” John 13:12-14*

We often see this passage as an example of selfless service. Jesus doesn’t just talk the talk, but He walks the walk, putting Himself in the place of a servant and it is indeed an example that we should follow. In addition to being an act of service, it is a beautiful picture of love. Foot washing was an act of hospitality offered to guests after a journey as they entered someone’s home. By washing the disciples’ feet, Jesus is portraying both servant and host as He welcomes the disciples into His home, into the very circle of the Father’s love. It’s not enough to just serve others with our hands and feet. We must open our hearts to love them as Jesus’ loved and invite them into that ever-growing circle of God’s love.

Lord Jesus, create in me a loving heart. Help me to not just go through the motions of serving you with my hands and feet. Instead, help me to serve others with my heart, embracing the opportunity to shower others with love through service.

### **April 4, 2025**

*Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout aloud O daughter of Jerusalem! Lo your king comes to you triumphant and victorious is he, humble and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey. Zechariah 9:9, Matthew 21:5*

Jesus knew what was coming. He knew the religious leaders were going to arrest and condemn Him, mock and scourge Him. He knew He was going to be delivered to the Romans for crucifixion. And so begins Jesus’ last week on earth. No longer is He encouraging those He heals to keep His miracles quiet. Now His eyes are fixed on carrying out Zechariah’s prophecy, and He enters as King. His entrance into Jerusalem takes Him into an excited crowd on an unbroken colt down a very steep path and into the city of Jerusalem.

It’s called the Triumphant Entry and serves to symbolize the triumph of humility over pride, of poverty over affluence and of gentleness over anger. He is the King of Kings and the Prince of Peace.

Lord Jesus, create in me a humble heart. When I am faced with difficult times and I know that the confrontations ahead of me are going to be intense, help me to get off my high horse and enter instead with humility and meekness.

## April 5, 2025

*Jesus entered the temple area and drove out all who were buying and selling there. He overturned the tables of the money changers and the benches of those selling doves. "It is written," He said to them, "My house will be called a house of prayer, but you are making it a den of robbers." Matthew 21:12-13*

There is definitely another side to Jesus. We are much more comfortable thinking of Him as calm, cool and collected. Jesus enters the temple and is angry and boldly confronts the unrighteous behaviors going on in His Father's house. Instead of a place where people could draw close to God in worship, the temple had become a place for selfish gain. The mantra had become "what's in it for me" rather than "what can I do for you, God."

I've been in a few church board meetings when I think that had Jesus walked in, He might have flipped some tables. As humans we sometimes take up the wrong mantra and forget why we are "church." It is in those same times that we often find our tongues twisted and our lips sealed shut. Perhaps there is a time when we must be bold and speak up for what we know is right.

Lord Jesus, create in me a bold heart. Help me to sense when You would have me to speak out against injustices. Let it not be at my own whim, but with Your divine guidance, and let me never forget that the tongue can be a fire of unrighteousness.

## April 7, 2025

*Early in the morning, as He was on his way back to the city, He was hungry. Seeing a fig tree by the road, He went up to it but found nothing on it except leaves. Then He said to it, "May you never bear fruit again." Immediately the tree withered. Matthew 21:18-19*

So what's going on here? Just yesterday, Jesus tore apart the temple and now He's cursing a fig tree? He could be really, really angry. After all, He knows what's going to happen later in the week. From a human perspective, I'd think He had every right to be angry. But that's not what's going on here.

Jesus is hungry and He sees a single fig tree in full leaf. It's an early bloomer and its foliage suggests that it should have some early figs. But on examination, it's all leaves and no fruit. Jesus has talked to his disciples a lot about producing fruit. The stakes of not producing fruit are high. So are the stakes of giving the fruitful impression and in reality, only putting on a show. This fig tree looks like it should be filled with figs, but it's all leaves. There are no figs. Some people are like that. They are all show, and no fruit.

Lord Jesus, create in me a fruitful heart. Let my actions and my words be more than just heartless motions and mindless words. Instead, let my heart overflow with the genuine fruit of the Spirit.

## **April 8, 2025**

*Jesus replied, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it, Love your neighbor as yourself. Matthew 22:37-38*

Surrounded by those who want to see Him dead. Tormented by Sadducees and Pharisees that keep trying to trip Him up by their questioning. Their eyes are filled with hate. They are blood thirsty and want Jesus dead. And what does Jesus do? Jesus talks to them about love. Whatever the question, whatever the circumstance, love is the answer. Love God, love others.

Lord Jesus, create in me an agape heart. Let my love for You be foremost in my words and my actions and let that love spill over on my neighbors as myself.

## **April 9, 2025**

*Then Jesus said to the crowds and His disciples, "So you must obey them (the teachers of the law and the Pharisees) and do everything they tell you. But do not do what they do, for they do not practice what they preach." Matthew 23:1,3*

As we travel on through Holy Week, Jesus lets it be known to the crowds what He really thinks about the religious leaders of the day. No longer is He talking in parables or in carefully chosen words to avoid arrest. Instead, He issues seven woes, calling the teachers of the law and Pharisees hypocrites, blind guides, snakes and broods of vipers. His accusations are many including that they only put on a show of religion and of following the letter of the law while missing the important matters of mercy and faith. He accuses them of looking righteous on the outside, but being filled with hypocrisy and wickedness. Read Matthew 23 for the rest of Jesus' speech regarding the religious leadership of that day. He minces no words and tells it exactly as it is. It's not hidden in a parable. It's a blunt warning to the people that not everyone practices what they preach. Not everyone is as holy inside as they portray on the outside.

Lord Jesus, create in me a discerning heart. In this world, there is much that is reported "as gospel" that is far from the truth. Help me to search the scriptures and know Your heart and Your will for my life.

## **April 10, 2025**

*When He was accused by the chief priests and the elders, He gave no answer. Then Pilate asked Him, "don't you hear the testimony they are bringing against you? But Jesus made no reply, not even to a single charge to the amazement of the governor." Matthew 27:11-14*

Silence. Did you hear that? Silence. Jesus, the same one who had much to say about the religious leaders, the ones He'd called hypocrites just a few days before, is silent. He gives no reaction to either validate or deny the charges that have been brought against Him. This left the governor amazed.

There is much power in that silence. It is at that moment that Jesus took on the guilt of the whole human race. He didn't deserve to be punished. While He was completely innocent of anything worthy of death, He chose us over His own life. He chose to take the guilt of the whole world that we might be forgiven. And Pilate was amazed.

Lord Jesus, create in me an amazed heart, one that never forgets to stand in awe at all You've done for me.

## **April 11, 2025**

*They stripped Him and put a scarlet robe on Him and then twisted together a crown of thorns and set it on His head. They put a staff in His right hand and knelt in front of Him and mocked Him. "Hail king of the Jews!" they said. Matthew 27:28-29*

We've all been mocked. We've all been made fun of at one time or another. At the very least, we've felt slighted or mistreated by others. But compared to the mocking that Jesus endured, have we really ever been slighted or mistreated? Probably not. While we often feel the need to lick our wounds and feel sorry for ourselves, Jesus stood there and took what He didn't deserve, silently and bravely. Let's keep in mind it only got worse after this. Jesus is headed to Golgotha, to His crucifixion.

Lord Jesus, create in me a thankful heart. When I am wronged unjustly, when people mock and ridicule me, let me remember Your example. Anything that I am going through pales in comparison to what You yourself went through in my behalf. Thank you seems way too small a response for all You have done.

## **April 12, 2025**

*As they led him away, they seized Simon from Cyrene, who was on his way in from the country, and put the cross on him and made him carry it behind Jesus. Luke 23:26*

Not much is known about Simon. He had just traveled from Cyrene, an ancient Greek city on what is today the northern African coast. Perhaps he was coming to celebrate the Passover. We don't really know. He was just minding his own business and was seized by the Roman officers to carry Jesus' cross. Jesus first carries the cross, then Simon carries the cross, following behind Jesus. What a visualization this is of Luke 14:27, which reads "And whoever does not bear his cross and come after me cannot be my disciple." Luke 9:23 says, "and Jesus said to them all, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me."

Cross carrying is hard work. In this life, there will be many times when our burdens are heavy. Jesus calls us to follow Him but that doesn't mean our lives are going to be all sunshine and lollipops. We will still have burdens and there will still be crosses to bear. The important thing is that regardless of the size of the cross you bear, you need to be following after Jesus.

Lord Jesus, create in me a follower's heart. Help me to stay close to you following in your footsteps. Forgive me for the times when I have tried to carry the burdens of this life on my own.



## **April 14, 2025**

*Then the one thief said, "Jesus remember me when You come into Your kingdom." Jesus answered him, "I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in paradise." Luke 23:42-43*

They have crucified Him. The King of Kings and Lord of Lord hangs between two thieves dying a slow and agonizing death. Every ounce of strength He had was needed just to breathe. Every snippet of breath He could draw into His lungs was needed to muster a few words. It appears His work on earth is just about done, but Jesus is just getting started. He's still in the business of forgiving and what a forgiveness it is. Enduring what can only be described as unconceivable pain, the weight of the entire world's sins upon His shoulders, and He uses what little breath he has left to forgive and reassure a repentant thief.

Lord Jesus, create in me a forgiven heart. In the deep recesses of my closet, where sin lingers that I continue to beat myself up over, let me feel your forgiveness. Help me to forgive others with the same depth.

## **April 15, 2025**

*The curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. And when the centurion who stood there in front of Jesus, heard His cry, and saw how He died, he said, "Surely this man was the Son of God." Mark 15:38-39*

The centurion was an officer in the Roman army. His troops looked up to him. It was their job to keep the Jews "under control." They must have watched closely as their leader made this unexpected statement about Jesus, the very man who had made "controlling" the Jews a whole lot more difficult in recent weeks. He had much to lose by publicly confessing Jesus was the Son of God. He was jeopardizing his military career and most likely facing punishment from his superiors.

What had this centurion seen that would make him risk it all with such a statement? Where had he grown such faith? Faith is believing. Faith gives us hope. Hope is our encouragement to press on in life. Faith got the centurion out of his comfort zone. It will do the same for us.

Lord Jesus, create in me a faithful heart. One that believes, hopes, encourages, and steps out to do and say what is right regardless of the potential consequences.

## **April 16, 2025**

*Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene went to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the entrance. So she came running to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one Jesus loved, and said, "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb and we don't know where they have put him!"*  
*John 20:1-2*

Mary was heartbroken. She had witnessed the authorities take her Lord, mock and humiliate Him, crucify Him, and now that He's been laid to rest, He comes up missing. It is just too much. There's too much grief for one heart to bear and so she seeks out Simon Peter and John, telling them someone has taken Jesus. That's the only plausible explanation for an empty tomb, right?

Mary doesn't understand what's going on, but she knows two disciples that can help and she wastes no time finding them. When life gets the best of us and there's no plausible explanations for what our eyes are seeing and our ears are hearing, it's time to seek the help of fellow believers. Working together with those she's in closest fellowship with, they come to a mighty conclusion. One that is beyond the imagination. One that includes the most magnificent miracle of all times. Christ has risen.

Lord Jesus, create in me a believer's heart, one that knows I can never do it alone. Help me to nurture relationships with other believers so that in times of need, I will know just who to call on for help.

## **April 17, 2025**

*By this we know love, that He laid down His life for us and we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers. I*  
*John 3:16*

If we ever need evidence of God's love or Christ's commitment to show it, we need only to look towards the cross. Talk about going above and beyond! Jesus gave it all. He laid down His very life for us, taking the punishment we deserved. He stood in our place. He got what we deserved. And He did it out of love, the kind of love only being fully God and fully man could offer to us. The kind of love that is deeper and wider and higher than we will ever understand.

We are called to that same kind of love for others. As we study His word, spend time in prayer and fellowship, we learn together to love as He loved us. Sometimes others pose interruptions in our lives. Sometimes we stay focused on our self and do what we had planned. Other times, we get it right, and lay aside our own life to help others. Those are the sacrifices that follow Jesus' example and spread His love.

Lord Jesus, thank you for laying down Your life for me. Create in me a sacrificial heart so that I might be willing to lay down my own calendar of events, my own agenda for my brothers and sisters. Help me to put others first.

## **April 18, 2025**

*As Mary wept, she bent over to look into the tomb and saw two angels in white, seated where Jesus' body had been, one at the head and the other at the foot. They asked her, "Woman, why are you crying?" "They have taken my Lord away," she said, "And I don't know where they have put Him." At this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not realize that it was Jesus. "Woman" He said, "why are you crying? Who is it you are looking for?" Thinking He was the gardener, she said, "Sir if you have carried Him away tell me where you have put Him and I will get Him." Jesus said to her, "Mary." She turned toward Him and cried out in Aramaic, "Rabboni!" which means teacher. John 20:11-16*

One word. That's all it took for Mary to recognize who was standing before her. What an incredible moment that must have been! Jesus calls her by name and she knows without a shadow of a doubt it is Him.

It's the same for us today. Jesus is just one word away. He hasn't changed. If anyone has moved, it's been us, not Him. Always right there with us, calling us by name, always wanting to be in fellowship with us. Always ready with open arms to accept us back into the Family.

Lord Jesus, create in me a knowing heart, one that recognizes Your voice and desires to be ever closer to You. The lengths You have gone to restore me to You is beyond my understanding and I am forever thankful. Teach me to be more like you, Rabboni.

## **April 19, 2025**

*Then He said to Thomas, "Put your finger here, see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe." John 20:27*

I like Thomas. He's my sort of guy. He needs proof. He must have been from the Show Me state, don't you think? Jesus stops at nothing to reassure us. He gives us whatever we need so that we might believe without hesitation. If you've been scarred by the very relationships that should have built you up, no problem. Jesus reaches out His hands and says, I'm scarred up too. Touch me, here. If you've had your guts ripped out by those who were supposed to love you, no problem. Jesus offers you his wounded side and says they've done it to me too. There isn't anywhere that you are in your life, that Jesus won't come and take your doubt away. He did it for Thomas. He will do it for you.

Lord Jesus, create in me a believing heart. Where there is doubt, help me to reach out to You so that You can wipe it away.

**April 20, 2025**

*Jesus said, "throw your net on the right side of the boat and you will find some." When they did, they were unable to haul the net in because of the large number of fish. Then the disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, "IT IS THE LORD!" As soon as Simon Peter heard him say, "It is the Lord," he wrapped his outer garment around him and jumped into the water. The other disciples followed in the boat, towing the net full of fish for they were not far from shore, about a hundred yards. When they landed, they saw a fire burning coals there with fish on it and some bread. John 21:6-9*

Simon Peter was bummed. Life hadn't turned out at all like he thought it was going to these past few weeks. He'd denied the Lord not once but three times. He decided it was time to go fishing. His friends quickly join him. They spend the night fishing but have nothing to show for it. Not one fish. Then off on the shore, someone calls to them and suggests they lower their nets on the other side of the boat and the nets are then filled with fish. Hmmm this is sounding familiar, isn't it? It certainly sounded familiar to John and Simon Peter. The light bulb went on in their heads. IT IS THE LORD! Simon Peter starts swimming for shore, John is rowing as fast as he can. The nets are breaking due to the weight of the fish. They are beyond excited!

And when they reach the shore, Jesus already has breakfast cooked for them, a feast of fish and bread, supplying all their needs and then some. Can't you just feel the excitement? This has got to be the best beach party of all times!

Lord Jesus, create in me a joyful heart that recognizes Your presence in all corners of my life. Help me to shout out in acknowledgement "IT IS THE LORD!" knowing that You alone are the very source of life, this Easter morning and everyday to come.